

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (previously presented): A method of validating an identity of a user using a pointing device comprising the steps of:
  - providing data for the display of a background image,
  - providing data for positioning at least one object on said background image,
  - receiving a sampled pointing device (PD) signature including a set of position vectors, said PD signature generated by sampling a plurality of events corresponding to positions of a cursor while operating said pointing device to provide data relative to said background image,
  - comparing said sampled PD signature to a stored PD signature representing the identity of the user, and
  - validating said identity of said user in response to said comparing step.
2. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein moving said PD manipulates said cursor on said background image.
3. (previously presented): The method of claim 2 wherein operating said PD includes moving a mouse.
4. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein said PD signature includes data generated by clicking of said pointing device.

5. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein said sampling of a plurality of events includes a drag and drop event by said pointing device.
6. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein said sampling of a plurality of events includes sampling a time component.
7. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein said step of comparing includes applying a set of nodes to analyze said sample signature and determining if said sample signature satisfies a threshold matching criteria.
8. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
  - receiving a plurality of signature exemplars; and
  - creating a set of nodes associated with said exemplars.
9. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein displaying said background image includes displaying a graphic.
10. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein operating said pointing device includes positioning said cursor relative to said objects.
11. (previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein operating said pointing device includes positioning a draggable icon on said background image.

12. (original): The method of claim 1 wherein said step of sampling a plurality of events includes sampling horizontal and vertical positions of said cursor and a time parameter associated with respective ones of said events.
13. (original): The method of claim 1 wherein said step of sampling a plurality of events includes sampling a mode of said input device.
14. (original): The method of claim 13 wherein said step of sampling a mode of said input device includes a step of sampling a normal mode, a “drag and drop” mode, or a click mode of said input device.
15. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said PD signature is generated by processing said set of position vectors including processing a series of said events using a plurality of nodes.
16. (original): The method of claim 1 further comprising a step of:
  - receiving a verification request from a provider; and
  - issuing in response to said step of validating, an authorization message to said provider.
17. (previously presented) A software system stored on a computer readable medium for validating a user’s identity comprising software configured to perform the steps of:
  - providing data for the display of an object map to a user;
  - receiving data representing signature characteristics generated by processing a set of position vectors resulting from user manipulation of a cursor using an input device to provide a

sample of a plurality of events corresponding to positions of said cursor so as to further provide a sampled signature including said set of position vectors;

comparing said signature characteristics to characteristics of a stored signature representing the user's identity;

validating said user's identity in response to said comparing step.

18. (previously presented): The software system on a computer readable medium of claim 17 wherein using said PD to manipulates said cursor on a background image.

19. (previously presented): The software system on a computer readable medium of claim 18 wherein using said pointing device includes moving a mouse.

Claims 20 – 32 (cancelled)

33. (previously presented): A verification server for use in a signature recognition system including a user computer system having a pointing device and a display screen, the user computer system operational to (i) display a virtual pad on said display screen, (ii) respond to a positioning of said pointing device to position a cursor on said virtual pad, and (iii) provide a collection of vectors describing an operation of said pointing device with respect to said cursor; said verification server comprising:

an interface in communication with said user computer system for receiving said collection of vectors,

a signature recognition engine configured to (i) process said vectors, (ii) compare said processed vectors to exemplar signature data and, in response, (iii) provide signature recognition data.

Claims 34 – 48 (cancelled)

49. (new): The method of claim 1 wherein providing data for the display of a background image includes downloading a virtual pad consisting of said background image and said object.

50. (new): The method of claim 49 further comprising repositioning said objects on said background image to create said PD signature.

51. (new): The method of claim 1 further comprising displaying said background image on a computer display screen.

52. (new): The software system stored on a computer readable medium of claim 17 wherein said step of displaying includes displaying a background image and an icon on a computer display screen.